

Bruce Norum

### Committee Members

My wife and I come before you today to tell you a story. After hearing our story you will see why it is so important to pass this bill. Parent Rights. Sex Ed. Our story begins back in May last year. We requested a copy of this new sex ed curriculum that the teachers were reviewing at our school. (Exhibit A1) The teachers are totally appalled by what they are reading. So we go to the district and ask for a copy of the proposed curriculum – the district will not release it to us. They state it will be given to the public at a later date. WHY? Don't you think – public school, public right, parental right? If you were on the school board and a school administrator wouldn't you want parental input in the development? My wife and I certainly would – most people we talk to would like it that way. But not Mr. Messinger – he would not release it till he wanted to. We then obtained correspondence from Theresa Burson the curriculum administrator under Bruce Messinger. Please take the time to read the whole letter as I do not wish to take up your time and others reading the whole letter (exhibit A). In short Ms. Burson states "It doesn't feel right to do this in secret or under-cover". And a second time – "doing this in secret doesn't feel right to me". "I also believe any group that comes together should include members from both vantage points." She then proceeds to ask "to be relieved from all future involvement with the health enhancement curriculum, based on conflicts with my professional philosophy, undue stress, and sincerely held religious beliefs." (Exhibit B)

We read further internal district correspondence (Exhibit C) and we begin to see the whole community of Helena go up in arms and this becomes nationwide news all because this is not what the parents of this community want for their children. Experts on the subject are brought in by concerned parents at their own expense. We hear comments that Planned Parenthood and other special interest groups were invited to help develop the proposed sex ed curriculum – hearing this we wanted to know if this was factual or not. So we requested Mr. Messinger and the school district to release any/all information pertaining to the sex ed

curriculum under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). (Exhibit D –letter requesting info.)

To date this request has been ignored – WHY? Not only is this a right, it is a law and you would think that any public school would want to allow a parent to look at the books at any time. Wouldn't you, our elected officials be transparent if someone asked to see what you were up to? You, committee members are our elected officials, like the school board -however– you do not go around making laws “behind closed doors – in Secret” And if my wife and I requested information from the committee under FOIA you would provide it - Well, that was not the case for our Public schools – maybe some think that they are beyond the law – as noted on the first committee meeting – case law is in favor of the school district – NOT parents. Thus it is imperative that this bill pass. Parents are simply asking for the option to opt out or even better to Opt in for such controversial topics such as sex ed.

So, committee members, my wife and I beg that you support and pass this bill so that more Montanans are not victimized and forced to have their children exposed to such offensive, un-Christian and medically incorrect information by a school district. Again, we just want the basic right to opt our child in or out. We thank you for listening to our story and wanted to present one more exhibit to the committee (exhibit E) This is a copy of a nationwide broadcast by Planned Parenthood asking and coaching people from around the nation to bombard Montana newspapers with letters to the editors. We ask you the committee members – is this an agenda or what? We do not go around sticking our noses into North Dakotans or Idaho's business – we are just parents wanting to have an option regarding what our children are taught.

We are NOT a special interest group like Planned Parenthood and others with a special agenda – we are just concerned parents wanting the best for our children.

You wouldn't send the fox in to teach the chickens so why on earth would you send an abortion provider to teach sex ed??? So please, give the children of Montana a mire option, support HB456

Ex A1

For the record here is the e mail and response from the District. My very first request for a copy of the curriculum.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Burson, Teresa** <[tburson@helena.k12.mt.us](mailto:tburson@helena.k12.mt.us)>  
Date: Fri, Jun 4, 2010 at 10:40 AM  
Subject: Health Curriculum  
To: "[Michnorum@gmail.com](mailto:Michnorum@gmail.com)" <[Michnorum@gmail.com](mailto:Michnorum@gmail.com)>  
Cc: "Neff, Diane" <[dneff@helena.k12.mt.us](mailto:dneff@helena.k12.mt.us)>

Good morning, Bruce!

Diane Neff, Helena's Superintendent's Executive Assistant, informed me that you wanted a copy of the Health Enhancement Curriculum **DRAFT**. Our Superintendent, Dr. Bruce Messinger, will be sending a community mailing on Monday, June 7<sup>th</sup> which will provide an overview and links to the **DRAFT** and supporting documents. All of these documents will be posted online at [www.helena.k12.mt.us](http://www.helena.k12.mt.us) for public review. You will be able to see the document that will be presented to the Trustees at the Tuesday, June 8, 2010 at Front Street Learning Center at 6:00 p.m. School Board meeting.

In case you do not currently receive the **Monday Messenger**, the publication that Dr. Messinger will sending out on Monday, I have copied his executive assistant, Diane Neff, who will add you to the mailing list. In the **Monday Messenger**, Dr. Messinger will provide an overview on how to share concerns, support or questions as well as link information to all documents including the **DRAFT**.

I hope this helps. Please feel free to call me anytime.

Thank you for your interest.

~\*Teresa\*~

*Teresa Burson*

*Literacy and Curriculum Administrator*

*Helena Public Schools*

*May Butler Center*

*55 South Rodney Street*

*Helena, Montana 59601*

*406.324.2002 (Office)*

*406.461.4185 (Cell)*

EX A

July 23, 2010

3:30 p.m.

Bruce,

You just left my office a few minutes ago, and I should have talked with you about the request in the enclosed envelope. However, I hate to disappoint you so I didn't speak up and share with you my request. Following is a brief rationale, but I would also be willing to explain my decision more after you have time to read and process it.

It doesn't feel right to do this in secret or under-cover. I personally do not want to do this knowing that it is professional suicide, let alone requesting a few members of our committee to do the same. I also believe any group that comes together should include members from both vantage points. I believe the entire committee has the right to defend, justify, and re-write the DRAFT based on the community outcry. Opening this up to community participation might prove to be problematic which I know I would not be able to facilitate well. I truly do not have the answers to all this. However, doing this in secret doesn't feel right to me.

I realize that the Executive Board and you are asking for revisions on the "Reproductive System" section, but not the other controversial components. Rather, the "Human Sexuality" section would just be justified and the "Influence of Family, Peers, and Society" section not revised at all. I believe the entire document especially these three sections should be open for revisions by the entire committee.

Sorry that I did not have the nerve to talk with you in person about this, but I have tried. My enclosed request clarifies this brief note.

Teresa



July 23, 2010

Bruce,

I am requesting to be relieved from all future involvement with the K-12 Health Enhancement Curriculum revision work, based on conflicts with my professional philosophy, undue stress, and sincerely-held religious beliefs.

I am willing to be involved with the future implementation of all sections from the K-12 Health Enhancement Curriculum DRAFT except the following:

- FUNCTIONS & INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF SYSTEMS: pg. 36
  - Reproductive System (Structures and Functions of the Body)
- FUNCTIONS & INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF SYSTEMS: pgs. 38-40
  - Influence of Family & Peers & Society (Social, Emotional & Mental Health)
- FUNCTIONS & INTERRATIONSHIPS OF SYSTEMS: pgs. 45-50
  - Human Sexuality (Human Sexuality)

Sincerely,

Teresa A. Burson  
District Literacy and Curriculum Administrator

Cc: Bill Rasor, Personnel Department

EXC

Rationale

From: Messinger, Bruce  
Sent: Thursday, May 20, 2010 5:17 AM  
To: Burson, Teresa  
Subject: RE: More thoughts

Teresa

I am comfortable with members of the community who have participated in the planning process reviewing draft copies of the curriculum. We just need to remind members of the planning committee that the document is a draft and should not be presented or distributed until a final draft is prepared and presented to the Trustees. Following the presentation of the first draft to the Trustees, then it will be a public document and we will welcome comment.

I do recall the exchanged with the MT Partners for Sex Education dialogue earlier in the year. I am OK with this dialogue because they were providing input into the process. I think we need to begin preparing a written introduction to the planning process with purpose, rational and reference to best practices and state/national content standards. This will provide the staff, parents and members of the community the opportunity to see the whole picture.

We are OK, I want to be proactive in our planning as we go forward.

Bruce

Bruce K. Messinger, Ph.D.  
Superintendent  
Helena Public Schools  
55 South Rodney  
Helena, MT 59601  
Phone: 406-324-2001  
FAX: 406-324-2035  
bmessinger@helena.k12.mt.us  
-----Original Message-----

From: Burson, Teresa  
Sent: Thursday, May 20, 2010 4:51 AM  
To: Messinger, Bruce  
Subject: More thoughts

I haven't slept from worry about June 1st. The MT Partners for Sex Education is the group that Drenda has met with and shared about our draft and collected input for our K-12 Health committee for consideration throughout this year. I have forwarded info from Drenda to you a couple times also.. I touched base with you earlier this year about Drenda participating. This is the group which provided the SEICUS booklet and research. Remember? My worry is that Alexandra will push our draft out to her members. I do not know whether she has a previous or more current draft, but will try to avoid this by making contact today. I have not sent Alexandra drafts but possibly Drenda has shared them as she has been collaborating with them to gather input for us.

There are probably many others who have our drafts as we have parents, reps from the hospital, the dental association, law enforcement, OPI, and a few other community members on our committee. The HPS staff has electronic copies too which could be shared with relatives and friends. So with that said, I am thinking that maybe we should discuss whether trustees should have access to the draft prior to June 8 since this is a hot topic.

I will try to contact Drenda and also get more specifics today.  
Teresa

Terry,

Thank you for your phone call the other day. I really needed to vent. You requested that I send my editing ideas to you. I did share these, minus a couple things that I added today, with Bruce Friday morning, but he did not want me to email these to the committee and Trustees before we had had a chance to meet which we did at 3:00 p.m. Friday afternoon. However, I am not sure he wants me to share these yet. I know that it is important for the committee to decide any or whether there are edits and also this should not become a "Teresa Burson document". However, the committee has not had access to the thousands of emails that we have been receiving. Bruce asked me to work with the committee to address the "Reproductive" and "Human Sexuality" sections. He also asked me to work with the committee to clarify and document Montana's definition of marriage somewhere in the document as well as create a "companion document". (I personally think that there are more areas that need to be address which you will see.)

**So the attachment has the following notations:**

- If highlighted in yellow, I am just highlighting areas that we have been criticized of NOT including or NOT including enough.
- If there are "strikes" that means that I suggest deleting.
- If there is red font, it is usually an additional comment or correction to spelling.
- If there is blue font, it could also mean an addition.

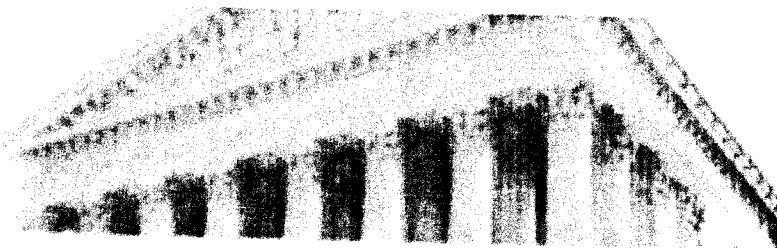
**The editing notes are at the right of each page.**

So, with all this said, I feel a bit concerned sending this to you. However, I believe you are technically one of my bosses. **Please do not email this to the other Trustees.** According to Bruce, the Board really only wants the two before-mentioned sections, marriage, and the companion document addressed during this next editing/review process.

~\*Teresa\*~

*Teresa Burson  
Literacy and Curriculum Administrator  
Helena Public Schools  
May Butler Center  
55 South Rodney Street  
Helena, Montana 59601  
406.324.2002 (Office)  
406.461.4185 (Cell)  
tburson@helena.k12.mt.us*

**From:** donotreply@aclj.org  
**Sent:** Monday, July 19, 2010 9:24 AM  
**To:** Burson, Teresa  
**Subject:** Teresa, thank you for contacting us



7/19/2010

Dear Teresa:

Thank you for contacting the American Center for Law and Justice ("ACLJ"). As you may know, the ACLJ is an organization dedicated to the defense of constitutional liberties secured by law. Our area of practice is limited to constitutional law with an emphasis on First Amendment freedoms of speech, assembly, and exercise of religion. Although some legal matters may incidentally involve religious belief or exercise, please understand that the ACLJ is unable to represent individuals or organizations in legal actions involving other areas of law, such as personal injury, corporate, family law, and other civil or criminal matters; these issues are outside our area of practice.

We will endeavor to review your request by the end of the next business day. In addition to this email, you may expect another email response or a call from one of our legal staff within a reasonable time.

While we consider your request, please feel free to review our website materials that may be relevant to your question(s). Our legal resources are generally available by linking to "ACLJ at Work," and then, "On the Issues" from our homepage. For your convenience, the direct URL address is, <http://www.aclj.org/Issues/>

**Please understand that the ACLJ cannot commit to assisting you until our legal staff have had an opportunity to review your request.** Upon receipt of your request, we will respond as promptly as possible and advise you whether we may be able to provide assistance. If your request is time-sensitive and you need an immediate response, please call our offices during regular business hours: **800.296.4529**. Please inform our intake specialist answering your call that you have received this response. As for now, please understand that the ACLJ is not representing you in any legal matter.

**Contact Information**

First Name: Teresa  
Last Name: Burson  
Organization:  
Address 1: 668 Jena Loop  
Address 2:  
City: Helena  
State/Province: MT  
Zip/Postal Code: 59602  
Country: USA  
Daytime Phone: 406.461.4185  
Evening Phone: 406.458.8736  
Email Address: tburson@helena.k12.mt.us

**Context of Conflict**

Conflict Type: Employer - Government Sector  
Official or Entity Name: Helena Public Schools  
Job Title: District Literacy and Curriculum Administrator  
Contact Information: 406.324.2037

**Details**

What Is The Key Issue You Wish To Contact ACLJ About?  
Other

Date of Alleged Discriminatory Act:



**Subject:** from the glad website

**National News / Religion, Faith & Values: Emphasizing the Importance of LGBT-Inclusive Diversity Education**

9/21/2010



Last week, GLAAD worked with staff from SIECUS, Groundspark, GLSEN and HRC on strategy, messaging and talking points for Bruce Messinger, a school superintendent in Helena, Mont. facing criticism for a proposed health education program that would teach respect for diverse families, including those with same-sex parents. GLAAD staff provided training for Messinger prior to his appearance on FOX News' "FOX and Friends" and, despite aggressive questions and comments from the hosts, Messinger presented viewers with effective talking points that underlined the need for LGBT-inclusive diversity education.

**Subject:** meanings of abbreviations

**GLAAD** - Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation: promotes fair, accurate, and inclusive representation of individuals and events in all media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation ... a good resource for media literacy classes. Phone: 1-800-GAY-MEDIA; Email: [glaad@glaad.org](mailto:glaad@glaad.org); Website: <http://www.glaad.org>

**GLSEN** - Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network: has a national network of local chapters and regional offices working to end harassment and discrimination leveled against students and school personnel based on sexual orientation or gender identity. GLSEN's student organizing project provides support and resources to youth in even the most isolated of places. 121 W 27th St, Suite 804, New York, NY 10001. Phone: 212-727-0135; Email: [glsen@glsen.org](mailto:glsen@glsen.org); Website: <http://www.glsen.org/splash/index.html>

**GroundSpark** (formerly Women's Educational Media): GroundSpark creates visionary films and dynamic educational campaigns that move individuals and communities to take action for a more just world. GroundSpark's Respect For All Project facilitates the development of inclusive, bias-free schools and communities by providing media resources, support and training to youth, educators and service providers. Address: 2180 Bryant Street, Suite 203, San Francisco, CA 94110; Phone: 415-641-4616 or 1-800-405-3322; Fax: 415-641-4632; Website: <http://www.groundspark.org/>; Contact forms for specific people linked from: <http://groundspark.org/about/contact.html>

**Heartstrong:** provides information and support to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and allied people who attend or are employed by religious schools of all denominations, kindergarten through university. 1011 Boren Avenue #199, Seattle, WA 98104; Phone: 206-621-9129; Email: [heartstrong@heartstrong.org](mailto:heartstrong@heartstrong.org); Website: <http://www.heartstrong.org>

**Human Rights Campaign:** a national lesbian and gay political organization which lobbies for human rights and works to educate the public. Their web site includes a "familynet" addressing family concerns (from custody to schools to summer camps). 919 18th St., N.W., Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20006; Phone: 202-628-4160, TTY: 202-216-1572; Email: [hrc@hrc.org](mailto:hrc@hrc.org); Website: <http://www.hrc.org/>

**SIECUS APPLAUDS HELENA FOR THEIR EFFORTS !!!**

"We know that young people who receive accurate information, have access to resources, and are equipped to discuss sexuality and related issues make better decisions both now and in the future," comments Jen Heitel Yakush, director of public policy at the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States. "SIECUS applauds Helena for their efforts and commitment to raising healthy, productive members of society and we look forward to seeing the implementation of the new curriculum once it is approved."

**"National News / Religion, Faith & Values: Emphasizing the Importance of LGBT-Inclusive Diversity Education**

**9/21/2010**

Last week, **GLAAD** worked with staff from **SIECUS**, **Groundspark**, **GLSEN** and **HRC** on strategy, messaging and talking points for **Bruce Messinger**, a school superintendent in **Helena, Mont.** facing criticism for a proposed health education program that would teach respect for diverse families, including those with same-sex parents. **GLAAD** staff provided training for **Messinger** prior to his appearance on **FOX News'** "FOX and Friends" and, despite aggressive questions and comments from the hosts, **Messinger** presented viewers with effective **talking points** that underlined the need for LGBT-inclusive diversity education.

**Staff Contact:**

**Ann Craig**, Director of Religion, Faith & Values

Email: [craig\[at\]glaad.org](mailto:craig[at]glaad.org)

**Cindi Creager**, Director of National News

Email: [creager\[at\]glaad.org](mailto:creager[at]glaad.org)

October 11, 2010

To: Helena Board of Trustees and Superintendent

Regarding: Health Enhancement document

Dear Michael O'Neil, Trustees and Dr. Bruce Messinger:

Per the Freedom of Information Act, we are requesting the following information regarding the "Helena Public Schools Health Enhancement" process and curriculum:

- All documentation, including correspondence, regarding the Development, Release, Revisions, and any other part of the process of the "Helena Public Schools Health Enhancement".

Relevant Facts: Parents, grandparents and community members have repeatedly tried to gain insight into or respectfully participate in the process. Despite these attempts, the process remains non-transparent.

Specific items requested are as follow. Please note, it is assumed that this information would be included within the language of the request above. Just in case they are overlooked, we have included them here. Items requested include, but are NOT LIMITED TO, those stated below:

- Documentation (electronic, written, etc) and all correspondence with, but not limited to, Superintendent, District employees, committee members, community partners and other outside entities or persons.
  - This includes (but is not limited to) MT Health Department, MT Partnership for Sex Education (and all its underlying entities), Pregnancy Resource Center, MT Family Foundation, GLAAD, SIECUS, Groundspark, GLSEN, HRC, MT Rite to Life, tribal leaders, and religious leaders.
  - Any correspondence or other documentation with other government agencies.
- All correspondence between the Board (including individual Board members) and District
- Professional Development and/or other Training received.
- Stimulus monies or other Funds that will be used in conjunction with the Health Curriculum complete with explanations of the origin of the monies as well as any requirements or benchmarks that are associated with the monies.
- Explanation of the "consensus" process by which all members of the Committee 'voted' or 'approved' or 'consented to' the original Draft.
- Explanation of why the District had all revisions done by Superintendent.
- The process by which curricula (in general) are developed, revised and implemented.
- Current work that is being done with regard to the Health Curriculum.
- All written comments to the Board. If significant comments were made by phone, in person, or a different manner, we are requesting notations of these as well.

We are making this request pursuant to Montana State Law:

- "No person shall be deprived of the right to examine documents or to observe the deliberations of all public bodies or agencies of state government and its subdivisions, except in cases in which the demand of individual privacy clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure", Constitution of Montana – Article II – Declaration of Rights, Section 9. Right to know.
- "Meetings of public agencies and certain associations of public agencies to be open to public. (1) All meetings of public or governmental bodies, boards, bureaus, commissions, agencies of the state, or any political subdivision of the state or organizations or agencies supported in whole or in part by public funds or expending public funds, including the supreme court must be open to the public." MCA §2-3-203.

- "Citizens entitled to inspect and copy public writings. (1) Every citizen has a right to inspect and take a copy of any public writings of this state, except as provided in 22-1-1103, 22-3-807, or subsection (3) of this section and as otherwise expressly provided by statute." MCA §2-6-102.
- "Records of officers open to public inspection. ... public records and other matters, except records that are constitutionally protected from disclosure, in the office of any officer are at all times during office hours open to the inspection of any person." MCA §2-6-104.

This request is also consistent with the National Guidelines Taskforce:

- "The community must be involved in the development and implementation of sexuality education programs. School-based programs must be carefully developed to respect the diversity of values and beliefs represented in the community. Parents, family members, teachers, administrators, community and religious leaders, and students should all be involved." See National Guidelines Taskforce in their Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education

As the intent is not to cause undue hardship to the District, we are willing to come into the District Office and make copies ourselves. We are also willing to reimburse the District up to \$150 to satisfy this request. If the cost is more than this, please notify us ahead of time.

We are making this request pursuant to Montana State Law.

Please satisfy this request by October 20, 2010.

Thank you:

Bruce Norum  
4315 Fox View Loop  
227-6771  
michnorum@gmail.com

Melinda Coplin  
6276 Ferry Drive  
461-0889  
mmcoplin@hotmail.com

CC:

Bruce Messinger, Superintendent  
Keith Meyer, Asst. Superintendent  
Steve Bullock, Attorney General  
Alana Listoe, Independent Record  
Trustees

EX E



## **In Washington, DC and in Helena, MT Planned Parenthood is under attack.**

We have been targeted with unfair restrictions, dishonest accusations, and bans on public funding. (Haven't followed what's happening? Check it out [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#))

Now, we need to respond, and we need the folks in our communities to hear how important we are! **So do you love Planned Parenthood of Montana?** Help us spread the word! **We need our friends to write letters to our local papers** - tell your story, say why we are important to you. Every bit of support is deeply appreciated, and we need you to **take ten minutes, and write a few words supporting PP.**

Below, you will find **links to submit letters to Montana newspapers and sample talking points to include in your statement!** Please take a moment to communicate with your communities! Please email or call the Public Affairs office if you need more info: 457-2469

## **SUBMIT LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AT THE FOLLOWING:**

Great Falls Tribune (250 words):

<http://www.greatfallstribune.com/section/customerservice03>

Helena IR (200 words): [http://helenair.com/app/contact/letters to editor/](http://helenair.com/app/contact/letters%20to%20editor/)

Bozeman Chronicle (300 words):

<http://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/submissions/?mode=letters>

Missoulian: <http://missoulian.com/app/opedform/>

Kalispell Daily Interlake (250 words):

<http://www.dailyinterlake.com/forms/?mode=letters>

Butte Daily Standard (400 words): <http://www.mtstandard.com/app/forms/letter2editor/>

## **SAMPLE TALKING POINTS:**

- Planned Parenthood of Montana serves over 20,000 Montanans every year.
- Planned Parenthood of Montana provides annual exams, birth control, pregnancy testing and counseling, screening for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and mid-life services.
- 97% of Planned Parenthood of Montana's services are preventative.
- Planned Parenthood of Montana helps our state and our Montana families save money by providing affordable access to contraceptive and reproductive healthcare services to low-income women and families.
- Nearly 70% of Planned Parenthood of Montana patients benefit from a sliding fee scale that assesses charges based on income and household size.
- Across the United States, Planned Parenthood doctors and nurses carry out nearly one million screenings for cervical cancer and 830,000 breast exams, and its health

centers also provide contraception to nearly 2.5 million patients, and nearly four million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV testing for women and men.

- For six in 10 women who receive medical care from doctors and nurses at family planning health centers like those run by Planned Parenthood, these centers are their main source of health care.

- One in five American women has received care from a Planned Parenthood health center at some point in her life.

**Planned Parenthood**

visit [plannedparenthood.org](http://plannedparenthood.org)

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